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IN SENATE
OF
THE UNITED STATES.

January 27, 1817.

DOCUMENTS

Accompanying a "bill authorizing the appointment of hospital surgeons and hospital surgeons' mates, in the navy of the United States."

Navy Department,
January 23d, 1817.

SIR,

In reply to your note, in relation to the memorial of Doctors Cutbush and Marshall, in behalf of themselves and the surgeons of the navy, who have hitherto performed the duties of hospital surgeons, and praying for additional compensation, with the rank and emoluments equivalent to the army establishment in the United States, I have the honour to transmit to you the answer of the commissioners of the navy upon this subject, and the opinions of several commanders in the United States service, whose experience and standing entitle them to respect and confidence.

The pay and emoluments prayed for, appears reasonable and consistent, when compared with

the Military Hospital Establishment, and a just reward to merit.

I would, therefore, respectfully recommend to the honourable committee the establishment of a definite rank to a limited number of the oldest surgeons of the navy, who, having devoted the best years of their lives to the service, under all the hardships and privations to which it has subjected them, and whose opportunities of acquiring property for the maintenance of their families have been less than any other description of officers.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

B. W. CROWNINSHIELD.

Hon. Charles Tait,

*Chairman of the Naval Com-
mittee of the Senate.*



(Copy.)

Navy Commissioners' Office.

Washington 22d January, 1817.

Sir,

In conformity with a request made in your letter of yesterday, the commissioners of the navy present to your consideration their opinions on the petition of the surgeons of the navy, referred to you by the Naval committee.

It seems to be but just, that inasmuch as the duties and responsibility of navy surgeons, call for an equal degree of professional knowledge as well as of respectability of character, with those of the army, they should be put on the same footing with respect to rank, pay, and emoluments.

The commissioners are further of opinion, that the navy surgeons as regards their rank in relation to each other, as well as with the surgeons of the army, ought to take rank according to the date of their commissions.

The commissioners cannot perceive the justice of the complaint of the petitioners, "that in consequence of their being classed in the distribution of prize money with persons with whom they do not, and cannot associate, the respect to which the profession is entitled has been considerably diminished in our public service." This classification is merely to specify the sum to which surgeons are entitled in the distribution of prize money, and neither involves any general idea of equality, or imposes any necessity of associating with inferiors.

With great respect,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

Signed

JOHN RODGERS.

Honourable B. W. Crowninshield,

Secretary of the Navy.

New-York, May, 1816.

SIR,

We have heard with pleasure that it is the intention of the medical officers of the navy, to address a respectful memorial to you, requesting that measures might be taken by the Department, to obtain for them a definite rank in the service, an increase of pay, and the establishment by law, of the rank of hospital surgeon. It has also been suggested to us, that the opinion of the senior officers of the navy, on the justice and expediency of those claims, might not be without benefit. We feel it therefore as a duty incumbent on us to state, that we consider the medical department of such great importance to the navy of our country, that no reasonable measures ought to be omitted, which could have a tendency to retain in the service the professional ability of those gentlemen, who, by their experience, knowledge, zeal, and humanity, have procured the esteem and confidence of those, with whom they have been associated; and we also beg leave to express our belief, that no reasonable inducements would be objected to by Congress, to procure for those who are engaged in a perilous service, and who are constantly exposed to the diseases of all climates, the best medical aid which the country affords. To effect this, it must be obvious that the rank and pecuniary emolument of medical officers ought to bear some proportion to what gentlemen of professional eminence would be entitled in private life; and we consider that justice requires they should at all events receive a compensation and rank equal to what has been enjoyed by the medical officers of the army. On the same principle, we would most earnestly invite your attention to

the establishment of the rank of hospital surgeon. To the army, *eight officers* of that rank are by law assigned. To the navy, NOT ONE; and let it be recollected that, whilst the hospitals of the former are supported at the expense of the government, a fund has been formed *from the pay of the latter* for the support of such institutions as may be found necessary for their comfort and accommodation. On this fact, comment is unnecessary. We leave it respectfully, sir, to you, with entire confidence that you will use all proper means to promote the interest and dignity of that department, over which you have presided with so much honour to yourself, and satisfaction to those who have been subject to your orders. We shall only add our request, that you will use this in any manner which may conduce to the interest of the surgeons and mates of the navy, and have the honour to be, with the most profound respect,

Sir,

Your obedient servants,

Sam. Evans,

Joseph Bainbridge,

S. Angus,

James Renshaw,

Geo. W. Rodgers,

James T. Leonard,

Edw'd Trenchard,

Ja. Jones,

L. Warrington.

To the honourable

Benjamin W. Crowninshield,

Secretary of the Navy.

Boston, December 13, 1816.

SIR,

We have heard with pleasure that it is the intention of the medical officers of the navy to address a respectful memorial to you, requesting that measures might be taken by the Department to obtain for them a definite rank in the service, an increase of pay, and their establishment, by law, of the rank of hospital surgeon. It has also been suggested to us, that the opinion of the senior officers of the navy, on the justice and expediency of those claims, might not be without benefit. We feel it, therefore, as a duty incumbent on us to state, that we consider the medical department of such great importance to the navy of our country, that no reasonable measures ought to be omitted which could have a tendency to retain in the service the professional ability of those gentlemen, who, by the experience, knowledge, zeal, and humanity have procured the esteem and confidence of those with whom they have been associated; and we also beg leave to express our belief that no reasonable inducements would be objected to by Congress, to procure, for those who are engaged in a perilous service, and who are constantly exposed to the diseases of all climates, the best medical aid which the country affords. To effect this it must be obvious, that the rank and pecuniary emolument of medical officers ought to bear some proportion to what gentlemen of professional eminence would be entitled in private life; and we consider, that justice requires, they should, at all events, receive a compensation and rank equal to what has been enjoyed by medical officers of the army. On the same principle we would, most earnestly, invite your attention to the establish-

ment of the rank of hospital surgeon. To the army, eight officers of that rank are assigned by law. To the navy *not one*; and let it be recollected, that whilst the hospitals of the former are supported at the expense of the government, a *fund* has been formed from *the pay of the latter*, for the support of such institutions as may be found necessary for their comfort and accommodation. And, sir, we beg leave to express our hope, that you will be pleased to give your aid, in promoting the interest of the surgeons and surgeons' mates in the navy, by endeavouring to obtain for them a more eligible and advantageous situation than the present rules and regulations of the service admit of.

We have the honour to be,

With great respect,

Your obedient and humble servants,

Wm. Bainbridge,

Isaac Hull,

D. Deacon,

Alex. S. Wadsworth.

The hon. Secretary of the Navy.

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